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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/925,562	08/09/2001	G. David Jang	S63.2-9950	6986
490	7590	10/22/2004	EXAMINER	
VIDAS, ARRETT & STEINKRAUS, P.A. 6109 BLUE CIRCLE DRIVE SUITE 2000 MINNETONKA, MN 55343-9185			PREBILIC, PAUL B	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3738	

DATE MAILED: 10/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/925,562

Applicant(s)

JANG, G. DAVID

Examiner

Paul B. Prebilio

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 September 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 34-36, 39-43, 47 and 49-62 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 60 and 61 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 34-36, 39-43, 47, 49-59 and 62 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

Election/Restrictions

Claims 60 and 61 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in the reply filed on September 8, 2004. It is noted that Applicant stated that all the claims read on the elected species M (Figure 10F). However, claims 60 and 61 were withdrawn because no support could be found for "circumferentially aligned" joining struts in Figure 10F. Support for this limitation was found in Figure 3A, however. Particularly, the Examiner concluded that struts (30) (the joining struts of Figure 10F) are not "circumferentially aligned" but are offset with respect to the true circumferential direction.

The Examiner, on behalf of the Office, regrets any inconvenience that the restriction requirement may have caused the Applicants; see the remarks filed September 9, 2004. However, the amendment filed June 30, 2004 necessitated the restriction because it added 12 new claims and 3 new independent claims. In the June 30, 2004 amendment, the Applicants stated that support for the claims could be found in various different figures; see page 12 of the response filed June 30, 2004, second paragraph. For this reason, the Examiner concluded that an election of species was necessary to reduce the number of issues for prosecution. Again, the Examiner regrets any inconvenience that this restriction requirement may have caused the Applicants.

Claim Objections

Claim 34 is objected to because of the following informalities:

In claim 34, line 29, "is closer one third" should read ---is closer to one third--- in order to be less grammatically awkward. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 51-62 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 51-62 (see the copy of the claims filed June 30, 2004), in claim 51, lines 7 and 14, claim 57, line 7, claim 60, line 4, and claim 62, line 4, since there is no inherently round or cylindrical structure claimed for the stent, the terminology "the circumference of the stent" lacks antecedent basis rendering the claim language indefinite. For example, stents can be in a folded or spiral shape when in their unexpanded form. The claims dependent upon these claims are rendered indefinite since they contain the same language by incorporation.

In claim 58, line 2, claim 59, line 2, claim 60, lines 3, 7, and 11, since there is no shape set forth for the stent, one cannot determine what "the longitudinal axis of the stent" is as claimed. For this reason, the claim language is considered indefinite.

In claim 60, lines 21-23 and lines 29-30, and claim 62, lines 17-18 and lines 23-24, the language "circumferentially and longitudinally offset" and "circumferentially aligned" does not make since there is no shape set forth for the stent.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 34-36, 39-43, 47, 49, 50, and 62 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown et al (US 6,348,065) in view of Pinchasik et al (US 5,449,373).

Brown discloses a thin walled metal tube (see column 3, lines 13-17), the first, second and third expansion columns are met by the adjacent segments (16) of Brown (see Figures 1 to 5), and the connecting strut columns as claimed are made up of interconnecting elements (20) between segments (16). Brown shows that the ends of the connecting struts are closer to one of the expansion struts than to the other. However, Brown fails to disclose curved connectors as claimed. However, Pinchasik teaches that it was known to make curved longitudinally and circumferentially offset interconnectors between adjacent segments; see Figures 2A to 2C. Therefore, the Examiner posits that it would have been obvious to make the interconnectors of Brown curved for the same reasons that Pinchasik does the same and in order to better support the area between the segments. Pinchasik further teaches that the connecting strut can be closer to one strut of the strut pair.

With regard to claims 35 and 41, Brown does not disclose the claimed ratio. However, at the time the invention was made, it would have been an obvious matter of

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design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to increase the number of connectors, especially in view of the prior art shown in Figure 1 of Pinchasik, because Applicants have not disclosed that the claimed ratio has some advantage, is used for a particular purpose, or solves a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicants' invention to perform equally well with more interconnectors so that the ratio would be 2 to 1 as claimed. Therefore, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify Brown to obtain the invention as specified in the claims.

Claims 51-59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Israel et al (US 5,733,303) in view of Richter (US 5,807,404). Israel (see Figure 1) or Richter (see Figure 1) meets the claim language except for the circumferentially offset position of the first (and/or second) ends of the connectors as claimed. However, at the time the invention was made, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to circumferentially offset the ends of the connectors because Applicants have not disclosed that doing so provides some advantage, is used for a particular purpose, or solves a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicants' invention to perform equally well because a slight position change of the ends is all that is required to meet the claim language and because it would not appreciably change the function of the stent to have a slight offset. Therefore, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify Israel or Richter to obtain the invention as specified in the claims.

Response to Arguments

Applicants' arguments filed June 30, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue that the Brown in view of Pinchasik combination does not result in asymmetrical cells as claimed in claims 42 and 43. In response, the Examiner argues that since the axis of asymmetry is not specified that any axis will do. Since the cells of the combination would be asymmetric along at least longitudinal and circumferential axes that the claim language is fully met in this regard.

Applicants argue that the Brown/Pinchasik combination does not have the connector struts closer to one strut than another. However, even Brown discloses that the end, taken as a whole, is closer to one strut than another because it leans that towards one more than another. Furthermore, Pinchasik teaches that one connector is clearly closer to one strut because it clearly comes off that end of the joining strut. For this reason the claim language is considered fully met.

Conclusion

Applicant should specifically point out the support for any amendments made to the disclosure, including the claims (MPEP 714.02 and 2163.06). Due to the procedure outlined in MPEP 2163.06 for interpreting claims, it is noted that other art may be applicable under 35 USC 102 or 35 USC 103(a) once the aforementioned issue(s) is/are addressed.

Applicant is respectfully requested to provide a list of all copending applications that set forth similar subject matter to the present claims. A copy of such copending claims is respectfully requested in response to this Office action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Paul B. Prebilic whose telephone number is (703) 308-2905. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30-5:00 M-Th.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, McDermott Corrine can be reached on (703) 308-2111. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Paul Prebilic
Primary Examiner
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